



Correspondence  
Item No. 4d  
Newport Banning Ranch  
PA2008-114

Officers:

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*Executive Director*

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Jan Vandersloot, M.D.  
*In Memoriam*

Via Email Transmission thru  
Patrick Alford, Planning Manager  
City of Newport Beach

March 22, 2012

Michael Teorge, Chair  
Newport Beach Planning Commission  
City of Newport Beach, CA

Dear Chair Teorge,

On behalf of the Banning Ranch Conservancy and the thousands of members of our group and affiliated groups, we request a fair and equitable process for the Newport Beach Planning Commission hearings that begin today for the proposed Newport Banning Ranch development project.

As was evident from the Planning Commission study sessions, public participants were not satisfied that ample time was provided, nor was there encouragement for any significant participation by the public. We were assured by you that the hearing process would provide that opportunity and that we should more fully participate in the hearings. Further, as a public agency, the City of Newport Beach and its public bodies are required to encourage the fullest and widest public participation in the public hearing process. To that end, we request that the following process be established to assure responsible public participation.

*Pro forma*, following the announcement of the item at the hearing, staff and consultants would provide a review of the project and the proposed EIR for Commissioners and the public, followed by a Q & A session between Commissioners and those presenters. The public hearing would then be opened with a probable opportunity for the applicant to present any comments. Members of the public would then be invited to comment within the normal three-minute timeframe for each. All of this is common and appropriate.

Now for the deviation from the *pro forma*. We request that the recognized, organized public group, the Banning Ranch Conservancy, be permitted to make a comprehensive, coordinated presentation on behalf of all our members. Instead of having potentially hundreds of public comment speakers, one organized group will speak on behalf of all our members. This will be a much more effective and efficient manner in which to conduct the hearing. It will prove beneficial to the Commission, staff and the public. In return, we will reduce the number of public attendees to accommodate and not overwhelm the Commission, the facilities and the process.

For our presentation, we request a time grant of four (4) hours. Recognizing that the EIR is over 7300 pages, that there were many comments and responses totaling over 1000 pages and that there are many significant issues to be addressed, we feel this is an entirely reasonable request for time. (In three-minute time periods, this would total only eighty speakers, much less than the potential number of speaker/members of the Banning Ranch Conservancy.)

One note, this request for time and our commitment to adhere to its inherent restrictions is applicable only to the Banning Ranch Conservancy and our members. We dare not suggest to represent members of the public who may differ with our opinions or are unfamiliar with or unknown to the Conservancy. Therefore, we recommend that any members of the public in those or similar circumstances be afforded the first opportunity to comment at the hearing.

This requested process is reasonable, timely, efficient and not without precedent. As a former planning commission chair, I can certainly understand any reluctance, but I am experienced in the use of the above-requested process from both sides of the dais and I can assure you of its effectiveness and do-ability.

The Banning Ranch Conservancy and our members appreciate the opportunity to fully participate in this very important public hearing for the proposed Newport Banning Ranch EIR.

Please contact the undersigned at 310/961-7610 for further clarification and/or to discuss arrangements. Thank you.

Sincerely,

**Steve Ray** /s/

Steve Ray  
Executive Director  
Banning Ranch Conservancy

cc: Patrick Alford, Planning Manager, City of Newport Beach  
Dr. Terry Welsh, President, Banning Ranch Conservancy  
Banning Ranch Conservancy Board Members  
File Copy

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